

Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula

Hare Krishna School

Founder-Acarya His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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2019 Annual School Report

School Board's Message

Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula is a beautiful school that offers a space to facilitate the spiritual, intellectual and emotional development of the next generation in a safe and culturally supportive environment. Our campus is nestled in the lush green foothills of the ancient volcano Wollumbin, providing an educational environment which cultivates a strong connection to and deep understanding of the natural world. In 2019, the school continued to strive towards cultivating an atmosphere in which our students can nurture their learning, developing a foundation for becoming mindful and resilient adults with a strong sense of spiritual and cultural belonging.



In 2019, our school has proudly graduated a second group of Year 12 students, with some students reaching the top results in NSW in Studies of Religion and Business Studies. It appears that our

second group of graduates all resolved to pursue further studies. Here is the list of degrees and universities that Gurukula 2019 Year 12 class received offers of enrolment: Bachelor of Biomedicine (QUT), Bachelor of Archaeology (La Trobe), Bachelor of Nursing (SCU), Bachelor of Midwifery (SCU), Bachelor of Law (USQ), Bachelor of Business and Commerce (Bond). On behalf of our Gurukula community, we would like to wish our graduates all the best in their pursuit of further education.



Once again, excellent community spirit and wonderful support was shown during the Pandavas Sports Carnival of 2019. Thank you to our Parents and Friends committee for organising sumptuous prasadam (sanctified food) for the event.



2019 was also the first year that our school was invited to lead the ANZAC commemorations at the Murwillumbah RSL. Thank you to our senior students for presenting their messages of peace within our local community.



The school's mission is to foster the spiritual, intellectual and emotional development of our students by basing its practices on the teachings of Srila Prabhupada, the Founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and supported by contemporary and evidence-based teaching methods. The focus of the school's community is to assist students in reaching their full potential as open-minded, inspirational and thriving contributors to society at large, with a firm

foundation in the principles of compassion, cleanliness, self-regulation and truthfulness. On behalf of the entire Gurukula community, we would like to thank the school staff, parents and students for their dedication to this mission in 2019 and look forward to further progress in 2020.

Premavati Devi Dasi

Chairman

Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula School Board.

About the School

Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula, being Australia's only Hare Krishna School, was established in 1980 in order to give children a comprehensive spiritual and academic education that will provide them with the skills, knowledge and values to pursue any chosen goal in life. Our aim is to offer our students an adequate foundation in order to make their lives successful and deeply fulfilling.

Being a registered independent primary school, we provide our students with all the Key Learning Areas from Kindergarten to Year 12 as per the NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA) syllabuses. However, being a part of the Hare Krishna movement, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and thus, always deriving the values and inspiration from the teachings of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, we extend the opportunities for our students to progress spiritually and to develop personal qualities of a devotee that will assist them throughout their lives. Qualities such as compassion, integrity and respect are not just taught, but also modelled and practiced on a daily basis in the accommodating environment offered by our school.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula provides a unique educational experience open to all families wishing to offer their children the most comprehensive educational start in life, integrating the aspects of devotional life, academic, physical and vocational education.

In 2019 the total enrolment of the school was 116 students, 60 girls and 56 boys. The school's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) was valued at 1051 points. Current SES score for Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula is 70 points. The distribution of Socio-Educational Advantage (SEA) is shown in figure 1.

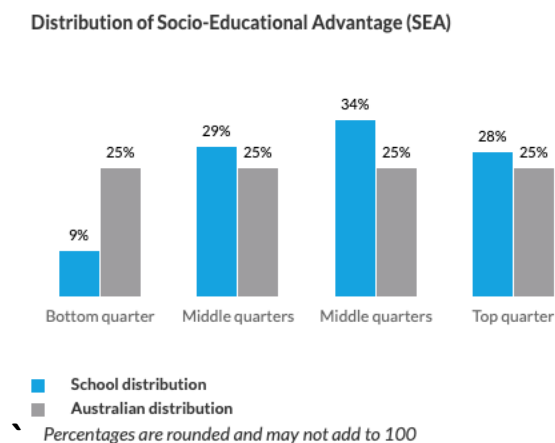


Figure 1. School's SEA

Student Performance in National Tests

Each year, students in years 3, 5, 7 and 9 are tested for Literacy and Numeracy skills, and their performance is compared to nationally established benchmarks in the areas of Reading, Writing and Numeracy.

In 2019, 96% of students participated and were assessed in the NAPLAN tests. In 2019, the school achieved scores substantially above the national average in Reading for Year 7. Year 3 reading, grammar and numeracy, Year 5 Numeracy, Year 9, reading and grammar results were above the national average. The results for Year 3 writing, Year 5 spelling, grammar, Year 7 numeracy and Year 9 spelling and numeracy were close to national average. The results for spelling in Year 3 and Year 7, reading in Year 5 and grammar in Year 7 were below the national average but close to the scores of the students of similar backgrounds. Similarly, the results for writing in Years 5, 7 and 9

were below the national average but close to the scores of students of similar backgrounds.

Compare to ● Students with similar background ● All Australian students

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Grammar	Numeracy
Year 3	450	431	394	460	426
Year 5	491	454	499	514	520
Year 7	583	488	517	514	547
Year 9	596	526	585	587	590

NAPLAN participation for this school is 96%
NAPLAN participation for all Australian students is 95%

Figure 2. NAPLAN Data

The school has also successfully delivered the HSC courses, with seven students graduating with the HSC in 2019. The graphs below (figures 3, 4 and 5) demonstrate band distribution for Business Studies, Studies of Religion and English and a progressive improvement of the results from 2018 to 2019.

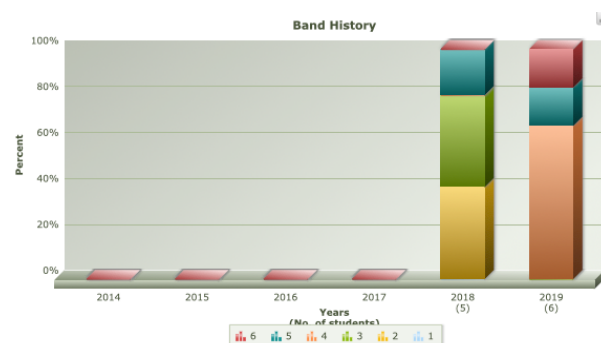


Figure 3. Business Studies Bands

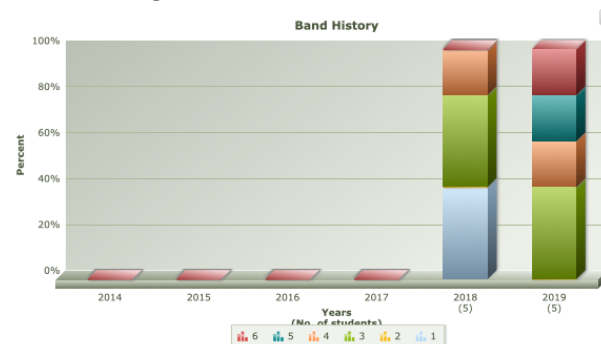


Figure 4. Studies of Religion Bands

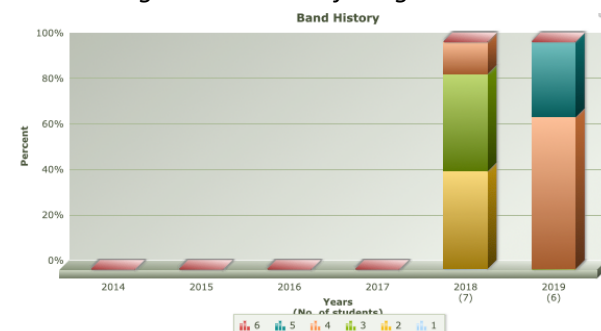


Figure 5. English Bands

(Band 5 is the highest possible band in this subject)

The results of the NAPLAN test in graphs, numbers and bands, as well as student gain description and performance comparison with similar schools are also available at <http://www.myschool.edu.au> .

Professional Learning and Teacher Standards

In 2019, to provide a quality learning environment for both the primary and secondary sections of our school (Years K to 2, Years 3 to 6 and Years 7 to 12), we employed 15 teachers (11.6 full time equivalent teachers) and 10 auxiliary staff (5.3 full time equivalent non-teaching staff) in various full-time and part-time roles. All the employed teachers hold formal teacher qualifications from higher education institutions that are recognised within Australia. Throughout 2019, the school staff participated in a range of in-school and off-site Professional Development sessions dedicated to the improvement of instructional practices and classroom management.

The in-school training sessions included:

- Developing policies and procedures for the whole school approach to the behaviour management
- Multi-Lit staff training
- Reading Mastery and Spelling Mastery coaching programs and training
- Analysis and application of the Australian Professional Teaching Standards

The off-site training sessions included:

- Behaviour Management Training by Bill Rogers (Sydney, NSW)
- AIS Teaching Writing Course
- AIS English Assessment Course
- Visual Arts Conference (VADEA 2019)
- AIS Science for Primary

- Whole staff First Aid and CPR training and certification

The standard of education is also monitored through direct evaluation of all Scope and Sequence and Unit Planning documentation developed by the teaching staff of the school. The plans are examined and discussed prior to the teaching term. Consequently, the plans, student performance and work samples are examined and evaluated upon their completion. Throughout the term, teacher performance is also assessed through Principal and collegial observations. Each observation is formally discussed and the relevant strategic plan is formulated to address the required needs. Furthermore, the school conducts tri-annually DIBELS diagnostic assessment (University of Oregon developed system for recording student progress and growth in primary literacy skills). The diagnostics are then analysed by the school staff and remedial programs are provided for the students at risk.

The school also encourages the teachers to identify their annual professional goals within the framework of the Australian Professional Teaching Standards and work conjointly with the team leaders and the Principal towards achievement of those goals. Mentoring programs, Professional Development, observations and support are organised to assist our teachers in reaching their professional goals.

Workforce Composition

<i>School staff 2019</i>	
Teaching staff	15
Full-time equivalent teaching staff	11.6
Non-teaching staff	10
Full-time equivalent non-teaching staff	5.3

Student Attendance

Student attendance rates

Student attendance for the first semester of 2019 was at 86% and for Term 3 of 2018 at 87%. On average 50% of all students attend 90% or more of the time. The school will require to implement further strategies in 2020 to increase the overall attendance rate. Often, an inconsistency in attendance is caused by the international pilgrimage travel undertaken by a number of families from the school. The details of the student enrolments and attendance are available at www.myschool.edu.au.

Management of non-attendance

Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula students are expected to be at school by 8:55 am, Monday to Friday. The first teaching period commences at 9:00 am. At the time of class-roll marking at 9:30 am, the students who are not present are marked 'absent'. Should students arrive after the roll is marked for the day, they are required to bring a note signed by a parent explaining the reason for being late. If a 'late-reason note' is not provided, the office administrator will issue a 'late arrival form' to a child and request that it is returned signed by parents the next school day. If this is not forthcoming, the administration will follow up with the parents and will refer the matter to the school principal should the attendance issues persist.

When children return after being away from school for one or more days, they are required to bring a note signed by a parent stating the day(s) they were away, and the reason for absenteeism. If such a note is not provided, the school administrator shall send home a 'student absence form' and request that it is returned completed and signed by a parent. Again, if this is not forthcoming, the administrator will follow up with the parents and inform the Principal of the above. It is the responsibility of the Principal to liaise with

the parents and discuss the matters of repeated absenteeism.

In the event of any student displaying a regular absence pattern from the school, even where explained by parental notes, the teacher will advise the Principal of the situation. The Principal will be required to discuss with the parents the issue of the repeated absence, the effects of non-attendance on the student's learning, remind the parents of their legal requirements to send their child to school on a daily basis and discuss the strategies that can assist to improve the regularity of attendance. An appropriate record of the history of student non-attendance, discussions with the parents and implemented strategies needs to be entered into the student's file.

A comprehensive description of the school's approach to attendance is available in the Attendance and Enrolment Records Policy available on:

<https://www.krishnaschool.nsw.edu.au/policiesandprocedures>

Enrolment Policies and Characteristics of the Student Body

Enrolment process

Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula, the primary and secondary school of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in Australia is open for enrolment to all students, irrespective of their religious, cultural and social backgrounds.

As such, it is our policy that any child can be enrolled in the school and it is our commitment to liaise closely with the families of our students to assist with the understanding and adherence to the lifestyle and behavioural practices that are the

accepted norm amongst the Hare Krishna devotees.

Enrolment procedures of this school include a four-step process applied to all candidates:

1. Consideration of each applicant's supporting statement/interview responses regarding their ability and willingness to support the school's ethos.
2. Consideration of each applicant's educational needs. The school may require additional information from the parents/family and other relevant persons.
3. Identification of any strategies which need to be put into place to accommodate the applicant before a decision regarding the enrolment is made.
4. Informing the applicant of the outcome.

Continuation of enrolment is subject to the student's adherence to school rules and payment of all school fees.

Student body characteristics

<i>Students 2019</i>	
Total enrolments	116
Girls	60
Boys	56
Full-time equivalent enrolments	100
Indigenous students	9%
Language background other than English	20%
Student attendance rate	86.5%

Reference: <http://www.myschool.edu.au>

School Policies

Student welfare policies

The welfare of students is a high priority at the Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula. For the primary school students, it is expected that their classroom teacher / home teacher is the person responsible for ensuring that they are given the required help or assistance needed to achieve their best potential.

Although as a small school, we do not provide counseling services on-site, we are able to assist students in need of such services to gain access to the public health services in Murwillumbah, NSW. It is our experience that such assistance is readily available, and therefore our reliance on such outside services does not leave our students at a disadvantage. At the same time, Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula has a well-established chaplaincy program that focuses on our students well-being by conducting individual coaching sessions and group activities to assist students with developing skills and knowledge for a healthy and wholesome lifestyle.

It is required that all teaching and administrative staff undertake regular training in basic first aid practices. The school administration is responsible for the maintenance and restocking of the First Aid Kit.

It should be noted, that the school will only provide medications to children in situations where we have been given written permission to do so by the parents. If the administration of specific medications is required, parents must advise the Principal in writing, and supply him/her the necessary medications.

In the event of accident or illness, it is the school's policy to provide First Aid treatment and inform the parents. If required, the school will transport a student to the nearest hospital in Murwillumbah. In less serious accidents, the transportation may be

done by one of the school vehicles; however, in serious accidents and emergencies, the Principal will contact the NSW Ambulance service, of which the school is a member.

The complete text of the Gurukula's Student Welfare policy can be viewed on our site: www.krishnaschool.nsw.edu.au

Discipline policies

The Management of student behaviour in Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula is a shared responsibility of the school community, including staff, parents and students. Its success is based upon the recognition of the dignity and worth of all individuals. Through the implementation of this policy we aim to:

- * Create a positive environment within our school and classrooms, so that teachers and students can work together in harmony.
- * Create a caring school environment where the rights and responsibilities of the individual are recognised and respected.
- * Establish a set of rules that protect the rights of all individuals.
- * Establish a clear set of consequences for individuals who do not accept their responsibilities and break rules, so that they are encouraged to recognise and respect the rights of others.
- * Establish a system of recognising and encouraging positive engagement and behaviour of the students.
- * Establish procedures so that conflicts can be solved in a positive, non-violent manner.

It should be noted that the Gurukula discipline policy explicitly prohibits the use of corporal punishment in behaviour management practices. The complete text of the behaviour management

policy (Safe and Supportive Environment) is available on the school website: www.krishnaschool.nsw.edu.au.

Reporting complaints and resolving grievances

The school board of the Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula has endorsed a policy that outlines a set of procedures that can be undertaken by individuals desiring to report a complaint or grievance, providing a number of channels for communication. Anyone desiring to obtain a copy of the grievance policy is welcome to request one from the school administration. The grievance policy is also available on the school's website at <https://www.krishnaschool.nsw.edu.au/policiesandprocedures>. It is to be noted that the management of the Gurukula always welcomes any input regarding the development and improvements that could be made to the school policies and operational procedures.

School Determined Improvement Targets

Achievement of 2019 priorities identified in the school's 2018 Annual Report

Identified Priorities for 2019	2019 Achievements
1. Culture that promotes learning	
Intended outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school ethos is built around high expectations and a 	In order to promote a common standard and expectations for student behaviour, the school's core staff has completed

<p>commitment to excellence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student behaviour reflects the school's ethos and high expectations • The school responds effectively when student behaviour does not reflect the school ethos • Students treat others with respect • High levels of trust are apparent across the school community • The school places a high priority on student wellbeing 	<p>a training by Bill Rogers.</p> <p>Trained teachers conducted seminars for the rest of the staff at the school.</p> <p>Students were involved in discussions about behaviour and our school's core values.</p> <p>The work commenced towards improvement of student behaviour, motivation and commitment.</p>
2. Building Teacher Capacity	
Intended outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers use evidence-based teaching practices • Teachers have a high level of content knowledge in the subjects they teach • Teachers are available and willing to engage with 	<p>The school's teaching staff participated in a range of on-site and off-site professional development courses and workshops, implementing the strategies in the classrooms and demonstrating high</p>

<p>students about issues relating to their well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers regularly collaborate with colleagues in their work • Whole school professional learning activities are based on clearly identified school goals • Professional learning plans are based on individual need • Teachers engage in relevant and meaningful professional learning activities • School leaders model good professional learning 	<p>level of professionalism.</p>
3. High School Campus Construction	
Intended outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school completes the buildings for Years 7/8 and 9/10 • The work commences on the buildings for Years 11 and 12, Art and Science rooms, 	<p>The work commenced on the Science and Art buildings.</p> <p>Earthworks, site preparation and retaining walls were completed for the</p>

outdoor play court.	construction of the classroom buildings. The school is awaiting the Tweed Shire Council permission to build.
4. Policies and Procedures Review and Awareness	
Intended outcomes:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school continues to review its operational policies and procedures and promotes the knowledge and understanding of the policies and procedures within the school community 	The school staff participated in the review sessions for the staff Code of Conduct and the new version of the Code was adopted in 2019.

2020 Priority areas for improvement

1. Continuation of work on developing culture that promotes Learning

Intended outcomes:

- The school ethos is built around high expectations and a commitment to excellence
- Student behaviour reflects the school's ethos and high expectations
- The school responds effectively when student behaviour does not reflect the school ethos

- Students treat others with respect
- High levels of trust are apparent across the school community
- The school places a high priority on student wellbeing

2. High School Campus Construction (continued from 2019)

Intended outcomes:

- The school completes the buildings for Art and Science labs for the Secondary School

Respect and Responsibility

The vision of our school is to prepare every student to contribute to, and thrive in their future by providing enriching educational experiences within a safe, supportive and challenging environment. We encourage children to develop intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic skills which will serve their needs and those of the community, while also helping them to build the foundations of respect for all living beings; responsible and active participation in the community, at a local, national and global level; and the development of spiritual consciousness and self-realization.

Parent, Student and Teacher Satisfaction

Throughout 2019, the Gurukula continued to maintain and improve the communication channels set up between the school, parents and the community. The school administration widely utilized the program of regular email updates and Short Text Message notifications related to the Gurukula's programs and activities. The school continued the active use of a Facebook page,

providing an additional communication channel and engaging our parents and community (<http://www.facebook.com/bhaktivedantaswami.gurukula?fref=ts>).

A variety of communication channels and the openness of the school to parental involvement continued to result in a relatively high level of satisfaction of our parents and friends.

Students' satisfaction has been expressed with the school's involvement in the cultural programs of the Hare Krishna movement during the festivals and drama performances depicting traditional stories of Vedic literatures, the preparation of which was assisted by our volunteering parents and other devotees.

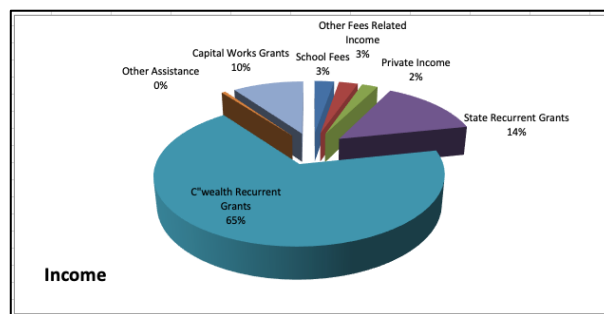
The teaching and non-teaching staff of the Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula have expressed their satisfaction with the increase of mutual involvement and collaboration in the organization and management of the school as well as improvements in the facilities and educational resources made available for the successful delivery of the curriculum.

The data demonstrating the degree and areas of satisfaction was collected using the Embedding Excellence Survey Platform provided by the NSW Association of Independent Schools, Transforming Organisational Culture and Practice Unit.

Summary Financial Information

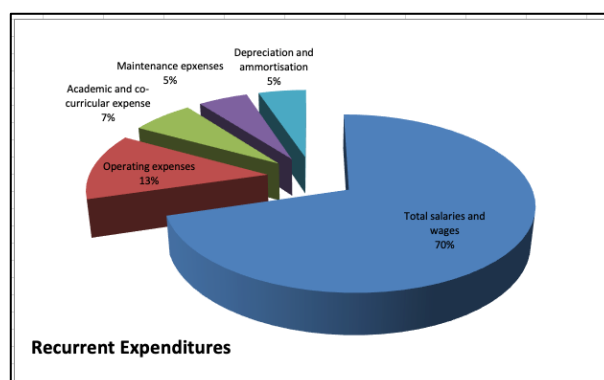
Income Categories

Capital and Recurrent Income	
School Fees	\$ 55,260.00
Other Fees Related Income	\$ 53,729.00
Private Income	\$ 45,216.00
State Recurrent Grants	\$ 291,051.00
Commonwealth Recurrent Grants	\$ 1,391,011.00
Other Assistance	\$ 11,412.00
Capital Works Grants	\$ 200,000.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 2,047,679.00



Expenditure Categories

Recurrent Expenditure	
Total salaries and wages	\$ 1,225,955.00
Operating expenses	\$ 220,459.00
Academic and co-curricular expense	\$ 114,831.00
Maintenance expenses	\$ 92,124.00
Depreciation and amortisation	\$ 88,459.00
TOTAL Recurrent Expenditures	\$ 1,741,828.00



Capital Expenditure

Capital Expenditure	
Additions to buildings	\$ 394,204.00
Additions to furniture and equipment	\$ 42,850.00
Total capital expenditure	\$ 437,054.00

